

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 24062 01 OF 02 191155Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----098846 191158Z /50

O 191140Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7338

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 24062

NODIS

CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1-2-3
TAGS: PARM, SF
SUBJ: POSSIBLE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

REFS: A. STATE 197389. B. PRETORIA 4211 REPEATED
PARIS AS STATE 196791. C. STATE 197411. D. STATE
196580.

1. ON AUGUST 19, I CARRIED OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS IN
REFTEL A WITH SOUTOU AND PROVIDED HIM A COPY OF THE
TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO BOTHA. I TOOK CARE
TO ASSURE THAT SOUTOU UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS FOR OUR
DECISION TO ACT IMMEDIATELY. I ALSO INFORMED HIM OF
THE INSTRUCTIONS SENT TO USUN (REFTEL C) REGARDING
CONTINGENCY TALKS FOR POSSIBLE SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION
AND THE PRESS GUIDANCE FURNISHED TO OUR AFRICAN POSTS
(REFTEL D).

2. SOUTOU TOOK CAREFUL NOTE AND SAID THAT HE WOULD
REPORT BOTH TO PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND TO
GUIRINGAUD WHO IS DUE BACK FROM AFRICA AT 10:00 P.M.
THIS EVENING. SOUTOU SAID HE WOULD ALSO WIRE THE
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PAGE 02 PARIS 24062 01 OF 02 191155Z

FRENCH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE IN NEW YORK ABOUT THE
SECURITY COUNCIL ASPECT.

3. THUS FAR PARIS HAS NO WORD ABOUT SOUTH AFRICAN
REACTION TO THE FRENCH DEMARCHE. SOUTOU SAID THAT ONLY
GISCARD CAN DECIDE THE FRENCH RESPONSE TO OUR INVITA-
TION THAT THEY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST FOR

IMMEDIATE ON-SITE-INSPECTION. SOUTOU INTENDS TO TELL Giscard that the initial South African reaction to the US demarche is not surprising and that, under the circumstances, he (Soutou) believes the US now has no choice but to push the inspection issue. At the same time, however, he said he would advise Giscard that even if France should go along with the principle involved (which is unlikely), it would be a mistake to try to join the US inspection team. This would only complicate matters and make South African acceptance even more difficult. In South African eyes, two Western countries would be raising serious questions about South Africa's sovereignty.

4. SOUTOU'S FURTHER COMMENTS MADE CLEAR THAT HE REMAINS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT TRYING TO LIMIT SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF THIS ISSUE. HE SAID DE GUIRINGAUD'S RECEPTION IN MOZAMBIQUE AND IN TANZANIA WILL HAVE DRIVEN HOME JUST HOW SENSITIVE BLACK AFRICAN OPINION IS ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. THUS, MOSCOW HAS A FERTILE FIELD. IF THE ELYSEE AGREES, SOUTOU PROPOSES TO INFORM THE SOVIETS OF THE FRENCH DEMARCHE TO SOUTH AFRICA.

5. THE FRENCH CHARGE IN MOSCOW HAS DELIVERED A

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PAGE 03 PARIS 24062 01 OF 02 191155Z

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PAGE 01 PARIS 24062 02 OF 02 191158Z
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7339

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 24062

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CHEROKEE

PROTEST TO THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY (THE DIRECTOR OF THE FIRST AFRICAN SECTION) REGARDING TASS CHARGES OF FRENCH COMPLICITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT. THE SOVIETS REPLIED THAT THE USSR IS GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION; THAT IT IS DETERMINED TO FIGHT AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF A SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR DEVICE "BY ALL MEANS"; AND THAT THE ISSUE WILL BE DISCUSSED DURING THE UNGA.

6. SOUTOU ALSO REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT NEXT STEPS DEPENDING ON THE VARIOUS CONTINGENCIES. FOR EXAMPLE, IF SOUTH AFRICA REFUSES INSPECTION, WHERE DO WE GO FROM THERE WITH THE RUSSIANS--NOT TO MENTION WITH THE AFRICANS? IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, SOUTH AFRICA ACCEPTS INSPECTION AND THE RESULTS ARE REASSURING, WON'T THE SOVIETS REFUSE TO BELIEVE THE RESULTS (OR PRETEND DISBELIEF)? I RESPONDED THAT, IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS SHOULD ACCEPT INSPECTION AND OUR PEOPLE WERE CONVINCED THE INSTALLATION IS CLEAN, WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO PROVE THAT FACT, NOT ONLY TO THE RUSSIANS, BUT TO WORLD OPINION AT LARGE.

HARTMAN

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PAGE 02 PARIS 24062 02 OF 02 191158Z

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